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SERMON CCXVI.

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PERDITION DREADFUL.

PSALM XXVI. 9. *Gather not my soul with sinners.*

THE sacred Scriptures make known to us not only the certainty of a future state, not only that it will be a state of final retribution to the good and the evil respectively, but also, that *at death* we enter forthwith on these rewards. In the New Testament, this point is placed beyond the reach of doubt; for, to the dying thief our Lord declared, "*This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*"; and Paul says, "*I desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.*" And in another place, we read of those who now "*through faith and patience inherit the promises.*" Neither was this great truth kept hid from the Old Testament church, as is plain from the translation of Enoch and of Elijah, without seeing death; and from the phraseology sometimes employed by the sacred penmen of the Old Testament, when recording the death of good men. Thus it is said, "Abraham gave up the ghost and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people." This *gathering to his people* cannot refer to the interment of his body, for the account of his burial is given as a quite distinct thing, in the next verse. Besides, his body was not gathered to his people; for all his relatives were interred some hundreds of miles distant from the cave of Machpela, where Abraham's body was deposited; some of them in Chaldea, and some in Mesopotamia. In like manner, Aaron is said to have been *gathered to his people* at his death, although he was buried on Mount Hor, in the wilderness, far away from all his kindred. Moses, too, whose grave no man ever saw, is still said to have been *gathered to his people*. The idea seems, therefore, to be, that at death their souls joined the society of the redeemed in heaven, whither *all*, who like them, are of the people of God, are conveyed on their release from the body. The Old Testament phrase, *gathered to his people*, must, therefore, be regarded as equivalent to the New Testament expression, "carried by angels into Abraham's bosom;" or, "to join the general assembly and church of the first born;" or, "*to depart and to be with Christ.*"

This interpretation appears the more probable, from the manner in which the Old Testament writers speak of the wicked at their death. Thus we read, Job 27: 19, "The rich man shall lie down, but he shall *not be gathered.*" And in view of the obduracy of the Jews, Isaiah writes, "*Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.*" From all which it is apparent, that, to saints in the Jewish church it was made known, that at death, each one, approved of God, should join the society of the blessed; while from that privilege the wicked should be debarred.

The passage before us, moreover, intimates that at their death, the wicked will be associated together. "*Gather not my soul with sinners.*" This prayer expresses the utmost earnestness of desire for separation from the wicked, and for exemption from their portion after death. Why, then, is fellowship with the wicked after death, so greatly to be deprecated? It is so,

1. *Because they will constitute a community exclusively evil, in which not one holy, or virtuous, or good being will be found.* The designation applicable to them all, without exception, is *sinners*.

In one vast assemblage will be convened all the wicked, all the abominable, and the vile, that have ever lived upon the face of the earth.

To the truly pious mind, association, even for a short time, with the abandoned and the wicked, is productive of exquisite pain, in hearing their blasphemies, witnessing their violence, their clamor, and their excesses. Nay, to any person of common sensibility, it must be a very painful necessity that compels a temporary companionship with the grossly wicked, giving way to their vicious propensities, their boisterous passions, and their debasing appetites. What individual here, but would feel it to be one of the severest of punishments to be compelled to pass a month in no society, night or day, other than that of the inmates of a penitentiary;—to hear their blasphemies and their ribaldry, their filthy witticisms, malicious raillery, and empty and polluted conversation: to witness continually their low cunning, and to endure their loathsome familiarity! What, then, must it be to pass a life in society so degraded, so heart-sickening! But, in the worst community to be met with on earth, there is still some good. Even in the most vicious fraternity of villains, there will be some more generous, or less hardened than the rest; some still retaining a spark of original nobleness of nature, a latent energy of conscience, restraining them from the last steps in enormity, and operating as a check upon their more reckless associates. And, in *all ordinary* cases, we know that the good and the evil are commingled throughout society; in consequence of which, a silent, but powerful influence is every where operating to restrain the wicked from innumerable excesses into which they would otherwise rush. Who has not seen this illustrated in festive company? At first, every thing gives promise of decorum, propriety, and rational gratification. The conversation is animated, perhaps, but intelligent and chaste, and every pleasure moderate. But when they, in whose presence effrontery is modest, and vice wears the mask, are observed to retire, reserve is gradually thrown aside, and mirth, and clamor, and revelry, rise higher, and yet higher, till, in one brief hour, all traces of decency and sobriety are buried in riot. Now this is but a miniature picture of the world. Remove the good wholly

away from among the wicked, and the restraints now reluctantly submitted to, would be quickly spurned and forgotten; and bold and rapid would be the general advance in wickedness. If, with the multitude of the orderly and the pious every where scattered through the land, and restraining the wicked by the mild majesty of goodness, there is still so much drunkenness, and dissipation, and sabbath breaking, and profaneness, what would very soon be the state of public morals, were the pious all taken to heaven to-day? Were the devout and the godly all withdrawn, the sanctuary closed, and the voice of the preacher heard no more, vice would reign triumphant over the land; and our lovely villages, and flourishing towns, would speedily exhibit only a counterpart to the wretched cities long since merged in the depths of the Dead Sea. How appalling, then, must be the prospect of being entirely secluded from the good, associated with none but the wicked, and with all the wicked of every class and degree of turpitude, and with the father of lies, and with his fiendish hosts, in one horrid community! If such be their prospect, who will not exclaim with the Psalmist, *Gather not my soul with sinners*. But consider—

2. *Not only will the society be composed wholly of the wicked, but, their evil passions, uncontrolled, will be the source of constant wretchedness.*

All experience shows, that tastes long fostered, habits long indulged, become fixed, and exert a powerful influence over the whole man, even against his better judgment and his sober wishes. The covetous man, in proportion as he becomes sensible of the meanness of his governing passion, finds himself stripped of ability to control it. The drunkard, with the fixed conviction that he is such, finds himself borne irresistibly along by a current of his own forming; and then, even the moving tears of a ruined family, and the thrilling interests of an immortal soul, all affectingly calling on him to pause,—yea, even the tremendous gulf of perdition roaring and raging full in view before him, only rouse him madly to redouble his speed, as if anxious to drown reflection in the very horrors of destruction. So, also, the licentious, while, with each reiterated indulgence, the appetite is cloyed, and gratification diminished, yet find the chains of their own forging but the more firmly riveted upon them; and, as the galling weight of those chains is becoming more painfully felt, the power to burst them, and the inclination to attempt it, are the more sensibly diminishing. In like manner the ambitious, the envious, the malicious, the irascible, and the fraudulent, are every day increasing the power of their dominant passion, and rendering the prospect of their emancipation the more hopeless.

Now what is there to warrant the idea, that propensities cherished and obeyed through life, will be lost in death? What authorizes the expectation that the soul, merely by a separation from the organ of its communication with the material universe, will lose its peculiar and distinctive characteristics? The mechanic, or the artist, is a mechanic or an artist still, when he has laid aside his tools; he has the same knowledge of his art, the same love for its exercise. In like manner, the soul must be the same still; as ambitious, or irritable, or proud, or selfish, when it has laid aside the body, (which

is only the soul's instrument for acting on material objects,) as before. The wicked, therefore, will carry their evil passions still in their bosoms, to the world of spirits; and, if so, they bear with them eternal fires of wretchedness to consume them.

Even in circumstances the most favorable to happiness, one single evil passion will fill a man with misery. What will riches and honors avail him, who is burning with ambition, or pining with envy, or who is agitated by vindictive passions? What can the kindest attentions of the most affectionate friends contribute to the peace of that man whose bosom is the seat of discontent, or who, from a consciousness of secret, unsuspected crimes, despises and abhors himself! What an amount of misery is sometimes inflicted on a large and amiable family, by a single vice of one member! What would be the condition of that family, of which each member should be the slave of some one odious propensity, and all clashing, in their pursuits, one with another? It would be wretchedness intolerable! What mind, then, can conceive the depth of misery that must pervade a vast community, of which each member is vicious—a slave to vile, ungovernable passions: where generosity, kindness, forbearance, and moderation are wholly unknown; where selfishness reigns uncontrolled in every heart; where each one is stung with fierce passions, and intent on his own gratification, regardless of all around him; whom he hates and despises, and by whom, as he is well aware, he is himself as heartily despised and hated. Is this the fellowship of the lost? Then *gather not my soul with sinners.*

3. *They lie under the curse of Almighty God.*

God is the great fountain of light, and joy, and gladness, to the intelligent universe. 'Tis his smile that lights the sun, and gilds the landscape with beauty. 'Tis this that sends the sweet thrill of joy through the bosom of youth, alleviates the toils of manhood, kindles the fire of domestic comfort and domestic love, and soothes the cares and alleviates the sorrows of declining age. If God frown upon us, the heavens are hung with blackness, the earth sickens, vegetation languishes, business fails, labor is fruitless, commerce decays, and pestilence and death desolate the abodes of men. 'Tis God's smile that fills the heart of the contrite with peace, renders the sanctuary a banqueting hall to the soul, pours a flood of transporting radiance into the Christian's closet, nerves him to successful combat with spiritual foes, gives him strength to walk steadfast in the narrow way, dispels even the darkness of death's gloomy vale, and opens to the view of the dying saint the glories of the heavenly inheritance. Deprived of all created good, the favor of God were happiness enough. Without it, the possession of a world were but splendid misery.

But where sinners are gathered, the favor of God never beams. They are left to the wretchedness of their own vices, unmitigated by one smile from God, unsoftened by one token of his favor or of his pity. Not only so: they are not merely deprived of his favor, they are not merely left to the uncontrolled dominion of their cruel and tormenting passions,—but they are made to feel the weight of his positive anger, the bitterness of his tremendous curse.

It is, I admit, a distressing, an overwhelming reflection; but the Scriptures distinctly present it before us, and represent the doom of the wicked by the most appalling imagery. They are consigned to a fiery lake, prepared, originally, for the devil and his angels. They are cast into outer darkness, tormented in flames, without the possibility of obtaining the least mitigation of their sufferings; which extort from them incessant weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; while the worm that never dies ceases not its gnawings within! Now this is no fanatic vision, it is no superstitious raving. It is a sober delineation of awful truth, made by the God of truth and love,—if haply we may be roused by it to adequate effort for effecting a timely escape! Read, then, this fearful delineation; ponder it well, and flee—Oh, flee from the wrath to come, while yet you may! Wrath—how intolerable! To be cast where all that is loathsome and repulsive in character shall surround you; where fierce passions shall rage in a continual tempest within; where the hand of the Almighty shall kindle fiery torments within you; where your breath shall be blasphemy, your drink tears, your only music groans and lamentations! Shall any of us sink under this tremendous curse? God, in mercy, forbid it!—*Gather, Oh, gather not my soul with sinners!* be the earnest cry of each of us!

4. To aggravate the curse, *memory will still live, and conscience never fail to perform her dread office.* We are, indeed, *fearfully and wonderfully made*; and not more so in our corporeal frame, than in our intellectual and moral conformation. How important, for instance, is the single faculty of *memory*. Without it, accountability were out of the question, punishment and reward alike impossible. Let a man be entirely deprived of memory, and he becomes conscious only of the sensations of the present moment; the past and the future are to him equally a blank. Science would be to him inaccessible, and all knowledge unattainable; for *science* is but a systematic arrangement of facts ascertained, and of the conclusions deduced from them; and *knowledge* is but the result gathered by memory from the experience of past events. Skill, and foresight, and care, without memory, were equally impossible. For how should he, who retains no recollection of the past, either pleasant or painful, know what, to-day, may yield pleasure or inflict pain? How, then, shall he plan for the one, or guard against the other? He must, inevitably, remain a mere passive recipient of sensations occasioned by the objects which are present, ignorant alike of the source and the consequences of his sensations; profoundly ignorant whether those feelings be a part of himself, the result of the operation of his own powers, or occasioned by objects external to himself; ignorant whether he ever felt the same before, or shall ever feel the like again; ignorant, in short, of every thing but the sensation of the moment. What idea could such a person form of punishment or of reward? Place such a being in heaven, and after millions of ages spent there, he would be no happier than at the moment of his admission! Thrust him down to hell, and he at once tastes the sum of his misery in the first pang; with its endurance, it is forever buried in oblivion. The past is forgotten, and is no more; the future is unseen, unanticipated, and *is not*. In the passing instant his consciousness

and his very being are wholly concentrated. Take away memory, and, it is plain, conscience expires with it, and remorse becomes impossible.

But, memory we have, and memory we shall forever retain. The saints in bliss remember their former pollution—they remember the terrors of the law, and they remember the efficacy of atoning blood; and hence burst their ascriptions of praise to Him who redeemed them unto God. Memory will act, also, with never dying vigor, in each bosom throughout the vast multitude of sinners. This is plain from the nature of the case; memory is an original faculty, inherent in the mind, and indestructible as the mind itself. It is plain from the charge urged home by the Judge of all the earth, on the consciences of the wicked arraigned at his bar;—"I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." (See the close of Matt. chap. 25). It is plain from the conversation between the father of the faithful and the rich man tormented in hell: "Son, *remember* that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things." (See Luke, 16th chap.)

In this world, the mind is so occupied with business, and cares, and pleasures, that the greater part of our actions are speedily forgotten by us; but in the world of retribution all those objects will be removed, and those pursuits will be at an end. The mind, with all its powers restored to pristine, immortal vigor, with the memory of each event fresh as at the moment after its occurrence, will be ever active in the dread review; each action will be weighed and scrutinized, and conscience, with eagle eye to see the truth, and stern integrity to declare it, will fearlessly and loudly pass sentence on each action, as its bearings and influences on other persons besides the actor himself, rise up in view. Then will each cherished sin betray its native deformity, and discover its murderous work on the soul. Then, also, in the view of the impenitent, will the conduct of God be fully vindicated; his sincerity and earnestness in the gospel offer will be distinctly seen, and thoroughly believed; and the damning guilt of unbelief, will be doubted no more. Despairing groans and tears of blood will reveal the agonizing conviction.

Could the condemned outcast but believe himself blameless; could he only believe his punishments to be heavier than his desert, it would surround him as with a panoply, and shield him from the fierceness of divine wrath. But this it is that fans the fires of hell, and pierces with ten thousand barbs the sufferer's panting heart,—he knows he is reaping but the just reward of his doings. Heaven's glories beheld in distance, and the echo of celestial hosannas heard in hell's dark caverns, shall only rouse conscience to proclaim,—*"Atoning blood flowed for us too; a heavenly portion was offered to us too,—but we spurned it for the momentary pleasures of sin."* All hell quakes at the confession! its fiery billows rise, and roll, and rage, and break upon the ear, *"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not."*

"These are the words which glow'd upon the sword
Whose wrath burn'd fearfully behind the cursed,
As they were driven away to Tophet—
Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not—

These are the words to which the harps of grief
Are strung; and to the chorus of the damn'd
The rocks of hell repeat them evermore,
Loud echoed, through the caverns of despair,
And pour'd in thunder on the ear of wo!"

And quivering lips and hollow groans reply, 'We knew our duty, but we did it not.' *Our doom is just.* The terrors of a guilty conscience, who can bear! Merciful God, *gather not my soul with sinners!*

5. *They know their doom is unalterably fixed; escape, relief, and change, and death, are alike hopeless.*

On this subject reason utterly fails, analogy can furnish no clue to guide; the collected wisdom of all created beings were incompetent to decide what should be the duration of punishment inflicted on incorrigible rebels against heavenly majesty,—on the daring despisers of God's offered mercy. But this impenetrable mystery the Infinite Mind has vouchsafed to clear up. The compassionate Saviour himself has said, "*the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment; into hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*"

Appalling though the prospect be, inscrutable though the reasons be that render such a decision necessary,—to doubt it were folly, and to deny it, worse than madness, since the Son of God asserts it. This it is that forms the crowning point in the wretchedness of the damned,—their woes shall never end! Those fires will never die out; that worm will never cease its gnawings; that frame, lacerated in every fibre—quivering in every muscle, and bleeding with anguish at every pore, will never sink exhausted. Respite there is none, relief none, change is hopeless, escape impossible, and death—oh! 'tis a living death; the soul grappling in one eternal struggle with the monster death,—bleeding in intensity of agony from his envenomed darts,—is *ever-fainting, ever-dying*—but never, never, *never dead!* Were annihilation possible after countless ages had rolled away, the gloomy anticipation might yield some relief—lend some support to the soul against its tide of sorrows; but annihilation is hopeless—it is impossible: for God has pronounced the curse eternal. His breath fans the fire—his almighty arm sustains the sufferer to endure it. Eternity!—an eternity of wretchedness!—how unspeakably awful! Such an eternity, so filled up with suffering, awaits the impenitent. *What*,—oh, what then *shall it profit me, if I gain the whole world*,—its highest honors, its finest treasures, its richest enjoyments, and then *lose my soul?* God of mercy! *gather not my soul with sinners!*

From the pit, whose horrors we have been contemplating, there comes up the voice of admonition. Ten thousand groans commingle in the sound; ten thousand sighs waft it to our ears—*he who is living in sin, impenitent, unsanctified, is fitting for a place in this horrid society.* Are you a lover of wine, and a friend to strong drink? are you covetous? are you wrathful and unforgiving? are you a votary of pleasure, a lover of vain company, idle talk, unseasonable humor, and polluting joys? Then are you in the broad way, hurrying on with rail-road speed to join the thousands in the pit, who, when here, trod

in your steps; if here now would be kindred spirits with you, and for association with whom, nothing more is needed to fit you, than a dismission from the body! Are you externally blameless, but inwardly corrupt and secretly vicious? Satan already marks you as his own,—and even now hell moves to meet you! Or are you living in no glaring sin, but in unbelief only? Remember, he who has said drunkards, and liars, and the unclean, shall not inherit the kingdom of God, has testified also—*he that believeth not shall be damned!* Let the refined, the highly cultivated, and the polished, ponder deeply this consideration—rejection of the gospel will consign you to perpetual companionship, hopeless of relief, with those very wretches from whose coarse wickedness and brutal vices you now shrink away in unutterable disgust! How will you bear to be their companions—their sport and their scorn for ever!

Of the doom that awaits them sinners are forewarned. If, then, in defiance of such motives, in contempt of such tenderness as the gospel reveals, men will press onward to ruin, mercy herself will suspend her entreaties, and use the high vantage ground to which she had brought them, only to occasion a more fatal plunge to the lowest depths of hell!

Dying sinner! “behold the Lamb of God”—the bleeding Saviour! Forsake the paths of folly—break off your sins by repentance, and surrender your whole heart to Jesus Christ, who is mighty to save. Believe on Him. That faith will purify your heart: and the entire change it effects in your character, and your emotions, will give assurance of acceptance, while you pray, *Gather not my soul with sinners!* Amen!

SERMON CCXVII.

By REV. IRA TRACY,

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THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST IN SELF-DENIAL.

PHILIPPIANS II. 5.—*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*

IN the example of Christ we have a perfect pattern for our imitation. A pattern which we are bound to imitate in all cases where our situation is like his. Let us, then, look for a few moments at *what he did for the benefit of sinners*; and then consider in *what respects our situation, in relation to others, is like that of Christ*. For the benefit of sinners,

I. *He left the honors and enjoyments of heaven.*

He was King of kings and Lord of lords. But he saw in this far distant province of his empire the entrance of sin. He witnessed the sorrow, and woe, that followed in its train; and, urged by love, he hastened to save the ruined world.

II. *He endured the company of the degraded and wicked.*

The vicious and the vile seek the company of those like themselves; but can one who has been accustomed to virtuous and refined society, be happy among the degraded and profane? And when Christ became the friend of

publicans and sinners, was it because their company was agreeable to him? No, it was compassion for the miserable—it was pity for sinners, that made him their companion.

III. *His labors were incessant and painful.*

"*He went about doing good,*" is the short, but exact description of his manner of life. This was his employment—his meat and his drink; and for this he refused no effort, however painful.

IV. *He came among those by whom he knew he should be despised and rejected.*

Take the history of his life on earth, and observe the treatment he received, and received, let us remember, for the good of others. See the Saviour of the world cradled in a manger, because the inn was occupied by those considered more honorable! Hear the proud Pharisee saying, "Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber—a friend of publicans and sinners." See him before the Jewish Sanhedrim. "They all condemn him to be guilty of death." They then begin to "spit in his face, and to buffet him." Others cover his face and smite him with the palms of their hands, and contemptuously ask, "Who is he that smote thee?" See him next, led away to stand, like a felon, before the Pagan governor. Here again listen to the slanderous accusations against him; and hear the infuriated cry, "Away with him, away with him! Crucify him, crucify him! And by whom was he thus despised and rejected? It was by those whom he most tenderly loved. He saw his enemies—the enemies of God—degraded, and perishing in sin, and his pity was moved. For our sake he could bear to be crowned with thorns, and spit upon, and called a vile impostor.

V. *He bore our sins in the garden and upon the cross.*

The self-denial, the condescension, the insults of which I have spoken, are as nothing, when compared with the sufferings of Gethsemane and Golgotha. It was in the garden that he began to drink of the bitter cup—the wrath of God against sin. See him retiring with the three disciples, and beginning "to be sore amazed and to be very heavy." "His soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." He lifts up his voice in prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but the burden is not removed. Again and again, he pleads, and no relief is granted; nor can there be, without the loss of a world. But the salvation of the world is an object so dear to the Sufferer, that he will not relinquish it. The rage of hell and the frowns of heaven can be borne, rather than we should be left to perish!

All this, however, is but the beginning of his sorrows. An ignominious death and the entire desertion of his Father's countenance are yet to be endured. "They took Jesus and led him away. And he bearing his cross, went forth. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' And he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

Such are some of the self-denials and sufferings to which Christ submitted for the good of others. Keeping this example in view, and remembering that, if the same mind be in us which was also in him, we shall do as he did, so far as our condition permits, let us

SECONDLY, consider, in *what respects our situation, in relation to a world of sinners, is like that of Christ.*

1. As Christ saw mankind perishing and without a Saviour, so we see six hundred millions of our fellow-men in the same condition—perishing, and without a Saviour.

Their souls, as precious as our own, are in danger of being lost for ever; for they are, almost without exception, such as inspiration has described, {Rom. i. 17—32, and 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, &c.} of whom it is declared, that *such cannot inherit the kingdom of God.* That this is their condition is admitted

by all who believe the Bible and have any considerable acquaintance with the character and conduct of the heathen. In this respect, then, our situation is like that of Christ—we see countless multitudes of our race hastening to eternal ruin.

2. As Christ knew that the salvation of the world depended upon himself, so we know that the salvation of the heathen depends, under God, upon us who have the Gospel.

"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." This evidently implies, that whosoever shall not thus call, will not be saved. "But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?" The heathen have never heard of Christ, nor will they, till we who have the Gospel, convey it to them. Their salvation, therefore, depends as really, though in a different way, upon us, as ours did upon Christ. If he had not come and suffered for us, we could not have been saved; and if we do not give the Gospel to the heathen, they will not be saved.

3. As Christ could not effect the salvation of the world without self-denial, so we cannot save the heathen without it.

It was impossible for him to become our Saviour without leaving his home and country, exchanging the society of heaven, for that of vile men, exposing himself to the scorn of the wicked, and consenting even to die, in the cause: and it is equally impossible for us to save the heathen, unless many of us leave our home and country, exchange the society we love for that of pagans, expose ourselves to the contempt and hatred of the wicked—to dangers and to death, it may be, in the prosecution of the work; and unless others who do not go, imitate the self-denial of the Redeemer in efforts to give them the Gospel. The extent to which we are bound to carry our self-denial, is left for each one to decide, in view of the worth of souls, and the example of him, who though he was rich, for our sakes became poor.

4. As Christ knew that his labors and sufferings would not be in vain; so we know, that if we, with the same spirit of obedience to God, and benevolence to men, deny ourselves, and give the Gospel to the heathen, it will be the means of their salvation.

We are assured of this by the effects which have attended the publication of the Gospel in every age and country. Our own ancestors were pagans—the blood of human victims flowed upon the altars of their idol gods—they were degraded and wretched, as pagans now are. But the Gospel was preached among them, and that by Christian missionaries; and it produced its appropriate effects:—such effects as we see around us, and are experiencing ourselves, continually: for we owe to the Gospel all our elevation above the heathen, in knowledge, virtue, and happiness. Similar effects have attended the Gospel wherever it has been preached in its purity; effects which it is naturally calculated to produce—it being the means appointed of God for the moral renovation of the world.

Finally—As Christ saw a sufficient reward in the joy set before him, so we shall be abundantly rewarded for all our efforts in this cause when we come to see the fruit of our labors in heaven.

It was for the salvation of men, and the glory of God, exhibited to the universe in the accomplishment of that salvation, that he condescended to assume our nature, and suffer in our stead. Our inducements to give the Gospel to the heathen are essentially the same. We shall be the means of saving men, and of glorifying God in the view of the universe. While we labor in this cause, we are eminently "a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men;" and when our work is done, and we are called home to our heavenly rest, then, as he sees the travail of his soul and is satisfied, so we shall welcome there one and another, who, but for us, must have gone to dwell in everlasting burnings,

but who, by our instrumentality, are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

It appears, then, that west and in the same relation to the heathen in respect to the certainty of their salvation, in which Christ did to us. Their salvation depends as truly upon us as ours did upon him; it will not cost us more; and every motive which urged him to effort in our behalf, urges us with equal power to effort in their behalf. If, then, "the same mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus," we shall make the greatest possible efforts for the salvation of the world.

To what other conclusion can we come? The situation of millions, for whom we are called to labor, is as deplorable as was that of those for whom Christ labored and suffered; the necessity of our making exertion for their rescue is as imperious; success as certain; and the reward as sure. He did what he could. He refused no labor, avoided no indignity, shrunk from no suffering, that was requisite for our salvation. If we, then, have the same mind, shall the love of ease—or wealth—or pleasure—or honor—or friends—or country—of any, or all of these, prevent or diminish our efforts in behalf of those now perishing for lack of knowledge? O, no; if we have his spirit in view of this great object, all earthly good will dwindle to insignificance. This will be the theme of our most anxious study, and the object of our most vigorous exertion—the great end of our life.

And, Christian brethren, have we not promised before God, angels, and men, that we would renounce the world and follow Christ? If our profession was not a mere form, have we not given ourselves to God, and solemnly consecrated our time, property, influence—our every talent to his service? What mean our covenant vows, if not the entire consecration of all we are and have? What mean our solemn promises, if not that we will take the word of God and the example of Christ as our rule of life? Those vows we have often renewed, over the emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood. And shall we now make it the object of our lives to seek the riches, honors, or pleasures, of this world? Shall we serve ourselves, instead of him who has loved us, and bought us with his own blood? His last command is, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." And I hear him saying, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." And shall we disgrace the Christian name by refusing to obey? Millions on millions have perished already, because professing Christians have loved the things of this world more than the souls of men. Stay, I beseech you, stay, (for it is in your power,) this flood of ruin. The salvation of six hundred millions now depends, under God, upon Christians of this generation. The heathen now alive, must receive the Gospel, or perish in ignorance of it. We, then, who have that Gospel, which is the means appointed of God for their salvation—*we hold their eternal destiny in our hands; and if we will, with the promised help of God, we can secure them from everlasting ruin.*

If all who bear the name of Christ, possessed his spirit, they would give the Gospel to every heathen in less than *thirty years*; I say this after careful examination. If all the churches commonly regarded as evangelical, in the United States alone, should engage in this enterprise, it would not require four dollars a year from each member to defray the expense of giving a Bible to every heathen family, and supplying the whole unevangelized world with missionaries. Less than four dollars a year! or eight cents a week! And where is the individual who, if he should make it a prominent object, could not obtain that sum for this purpose? Less than four dollars a year! or less than two-thirds as much as the average annual expense for the use of ardent spirits to the inhabitants of the United States, before the temperance reformation commenced. And is it doubtful whether the members of our churches are able to give two-thirds as much for this object, as the people of the United States did then actually give for ardent spirits? Or shall we, Christian brethren

ren, tell the world that we care less for the Redeemer's honor, and the salvation of souls, than people then generally did for ardent spirits? It might require some self-denial to accomplish the work within the time above mentioned; but would it require more than Christ submitted to for the same object? And must he deny himself, and come down from heaven, and labor, and suffer, and die, and we deny ourselves of nothing? But could men be furnished in sufficient numbers to carry the Gospel to the heathen? It would require only one, on an average, from each church of two hundred members; and where is the church, which, if all its members possessed the spirit of Christ, could not furnish, at least, one missionary?

This great work, then, can be done. Christians have it in their power to give "the Gospel to every creature," before another generation shall perish. The salvation of these millions depends, therefore, upon the willingness of Christians to imitate the example of their Master. And what are the real prospects of these dying millions? Will Christians give them the Gospel? Or will they, while they have it in their power to save, let another generation perish? Ah! I fear the latter. But, Oh! how long, how long, shall this murderous apathy continue? Is there no "redeeming spirit" that can rouse the church to action? Yes, the spirit of Christ can do it; that spirit which brought him from heaven for the good of others, and which is enkindled in our bosoms only by looking at his cross. We have looked at those around us, and taken our standard of effort for the heathen from the example of selfish men; and those heathen, meanwhile, have been sinking to everlasting death; and this course will continue till we lift our eyes to the Saviour, and take his example as our rule of self-denial and effort.

Deeply impressed with this idea, I would say, then, in conclusion, "look unto Jesus"—see him, though Lord of all worlds, willing to bear the cross, and to die even, for the good of others! O contemplate the bright example, till you be changed into the same image—till "this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus;" and till the purpose is unalterably fixed in your heart, that, whatever others may do, you will do all in your power to give the Gospel to the heathen, before another generation shall go down to the grave;—that so, at last, when you meet them at the bar of the Judge enthroned, their blood may not be required at your hands. Amen!

